

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction to the Exceptional Child

Course Description

ED 220. Introduction to the Exceptional Child. 3 hours credit. This course will enable the student to assess and determine diversity among learners with exceptionalities. The student will understand the need for teachers to collaborate with other professionals and families to develop appropriate individual education plans for special needs learners in the classroom. The student will explore public laws and mandates that pertain to special education, assuring appropriate education for special needs learners. The student will observe/participate for 10 hours in either a general education classroom that has special students included or in a special education classroom setting.

Course Relevance

Today's classrooms are increasing in the diversity of their student populations, and it is important that general education teachers not only recognize children with exceptionalities but also as well as the teacher's role when working with these diverse children. Through classroom observation/participation, the student will reflect upon and better understand children with exceptionalities and the need for effective teaching practices with these children.

Required Materials

Hallahan, D.P. & Kauffman, J.M. (2009). *Exceptional learners: Introduction to special education* (11th ed.). Boston: Prentice Hall Pearson Education Allyn and Bacon.

Accompanying booklet: *Cases for reflection and analysis for exceptional learners*.

Learning Outcomes

The intention is for the student to be able to:

1. Assess and determine diversity among learners, from persons with disabilities to those who are gifted.
2. Describe the importance of teacher collaboration with other professionals and families to develop appropriate individual education plans for special needs learners.
3. Apply the public laws and mandates that pertain to special education, assuring appropriate education for special needs learners.

Learning PACT Skills that will be DEVELOPED and documented in this course

Through involvement in the course, the student will develop ability in the following PACT skill area(s):

Analytical Thinking Skills

1. Critical thinking

- Through classroom observation and reflection, case studies, essays, and development of an electronic portfolio, the student will develop critical thinking skills.

Major Summative Assessment Task(s)

The learning outcome(s) and the Learning PACT skill(s) will be demonstrated by:

1. Developing an electronic portfolio that includes the following:
 - A. Interview with a professional and/or parent who works with a particular exceptionality.
 - B. Case study of a child with an exceptionality, including production of a collaborative plan for working with the child in a regular education classroom.
 - C. Reflection and letter verifying 10 hours of observation and/or participation in either a general education classroom that has special students included or in a special education classroom setting.

Course Content

- I. Skills/Competencies – Actions that are essential to achieve the course outcomes:
 - A. Relate the provisions of laws to the education of exceptional children and adults within public school settings, community agencies, and other institutional settings
 - B. Interpret and understand an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
 - C. Describe particular exceptionalities
 - D. Identify effective teaching strategies for particular exceptionalities
 - E. Discuss transition into community, home, or further schooling for particular exceptionalities
 - F. Develop an electronic portfolio
- II. Themes – Key recurring concepts that run throughout this course:
 - A. Laws/mandates that relate to the education of exceptional children
 - B. Contracting among the school, family, and outside agencies
 - C. Technology and its impact on the exceptional learner
 - D. The family's role in the life of the exceptional child
- III. Issues – Key areas of conflict that must be understood in order to achieve the intended outcome:
 - A. Current trends and terms in special education
 - B. Awareness of cultural differences present in some exceptionalities
 - C. Controversies surrounding areas of giftedness
- IV. Concepts – Key concepts that must be understood to address the issues:
 - A. General teaching strategies such as cooperative teaching, peer tutoring, peer collaboration and collaborative consultation
 - B. The family's role in the life of the exceptional child, possible teacher interaction and strategies, the individualized family service plan, and effects on the family

Learning Units

- I. Overview of exceptional learners
 - A. Important terms
 - B. History of special education
 - C. Special education process

- D. Purpose of the IEP
- E. Teacher's roles

- II. Current trends and issues
 - A. Important terms
 - B. Service delivery and service alternatives
 - C. Premise of full inclusion
 - D. Arguments against full inclusion
 - E. Early intervention
 - F. Transition

- III. Multicultural and bilingual aspects of special education
 - A. Important terms
 - B. Issues in diversity
 - C. Goals for equality and fairness

- IV. Analysis of particular exceptionalities
 - A. Mental retardation (MR)
 - B. Learning disabilities
 - C. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
 - D. Emotional or behavioral disorders
 - E. Gifted learners
 - F. Communication disorders
 - G. Hearing impairments
 - H. Visual impairments
 - I. Physical disabilities and medically fragile children

- V. Parents and families
 - A. Background
 - B. Families and their emotions
 - C. Teachers helping families
 - D. Ways to communicate

Learning activities

Independent and group learning activities such as discussion, journals, classroom observation/participation, projects, interviews, presentations, essays, guest speakers, videos, and other activities at the discretion of the instructor will be assigned to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Grade Determination

Grade determination will be based on learning activities and assessment tasks. Grade determinants may include the following: interviews, case studies, participation in class discussions, presentations, an electronic portfolio, classroom observation/participation and reflection, and other methods of evaluation at the discretion of the instructor.